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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-third session
Item 149 of the provisional agenda*
CONSIDERATION OF EFFECTIVE MEASURES
TO ENHANCE THE PROTECTION, SECURITY
AND SAFETY OF DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR
MISSIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 2 September 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to express grave concern about the contradictory reports coming from Afghanistan and the region concerning the fate of the staff of the Consulate-General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Mazar-e-Sharif and the correspondent of the Islamic Republic News Agency in that city after their abduction by offensive forces of the Taliban on 8 August 1998. The most disturbing news is the British Broadcasting Corporation interview with Mullah Mohammad Omar, published at 1525 (GMT) on 31 August, in which he reportedly referred to the Iranian diplomats and curtly said: "Taliban soldiers acting without the leadership's knowledge may have killed them". The Islamic Republic of Iran views the statement attributed to the leader of the Taliban as extremely irresponsible and an indication that the lives of Iranian diplomatic personnel and the Islamic Republic News Agency correspondent in Mazar-e-Sharif may be in serious danger.

Following my consultations with your Special Envoy for Afghanistan and with the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs last week about the dispatch to Afghanistan of a fact-finding mission to determine the fate of the personnel of the Consulate-General and other Iranian nationals there, as well as the extensive consultations by the Islamic Republic of Iran in the region, I wish to inform you that there is significant reception in the region for such a mission.

Recalling paragraph 8 of Security Council resolution 1193 (1998) of 28 August 1998, which reads: "Condemns also the capture of the

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Consulate-General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Mazar-e-Sharif, and demands that all parties and, in particular the Taliban, do everything possible to ensure safe and dignified passage out of Afghanistan of the personnel of the Consulate-General and other Iranian nationals missing in Afghanistan", and in the light of the disconcerting and contradictory reports, which have given the issue even more urgency, I have the honour to request that you use your good offices and urgently dispatch a fact-finding mission to Afghanistan on this potentially perilous issue.

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that with the cooperation of the parties concerned in good faith, the fact-finding mission will be in a position to help resolve this critical problem and thereby to prevent further complication of the situation.

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter were circulated as a document of the Security Council and of the General Assembly, under item 149 of the provisional agenda of the fifty-third session.

(Signed) Hadi NEJAD HOSSEINIAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative